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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT WEDNESDAY, July 3, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TIPS FOR CAMPERS." Information from the Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

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Some 35 million people visit out National Forests every year. Many of these people go to the Forests on summer camping trips. To accommodate these thousands of campers and also protect the forests, the U. S. Forest Service with the aid of the CCC has already established 4 thousand national forest camp and picnic grounds. These recreation centers are simple and rustic. But for the health and safety of campers and picnickers they have such conveniences as fireplaces, tables, benches, safe drinking water, garbage pits and toilets. The camp and picnic grounds now will take care of almost a quarter of a million people at one time. Then, for the people with a pioneering spirit who want to "rough it" on their own, the Forest Service has set aside what it calls "wilderness areas" hundreds of square miles in size. These wilderness areas are really "wild"; they have no roads, hot-dog stands, hotels, or other marks of civilization. They are for the visitors who appreciate seeing the forest in its natural state.

The foresters themselves, of course, are experts at the art of camping. That's part of their job. And they are always willing to help the beginner at camping.

One forest officer, John W. Spencer, reports the 4 things most likely to spoil the trip for beginning campers. He says these are: mosquitoes; bad weather; wet wood; and wrong camping equipment.

Here are some of his suggestions for avoiding trouble. First, about mosquitoes. He says if you must go camping during the mosquito season, set up your tent and make your camp out in the open where the wind can reach you. Wind blows

mosquitoes away. Don't put your camp in the deep timber, or in a wet meadow, or close to a stream or lake. If you are especially sensitive to mosquito bites, wear a broad-brimmed hat and a head-net of bobbinet with a drawstring to pull it close in around the neck.

You can also use some mixture on your face and hands that will help to repel mosquitoes. A very effective repellent is a mixture of 1 part oil of citronella; 1 part spirits of camphor; one-half part cedar oil; and olive oil to dilute the mixture.

Now about equipment for camping. The idea of sleeping directly on the ground, or making a bed of pine boughs may appeal to your pioneer spirit, but if you spend 51 weeks of the year in town and then try one week in uncomfortable sleeping quarters, you won't sleep and won't enjoy your camping trip. So take along a comfortable bed. One good combination is an air mattress and an eiderdown coverlet. If you haven't these, use some good old-fashioned quilts and soft wool blankets. Leave your folding cots at home if you are going where nights are cold. Sleep in the car if you can, or on a mattress or quilts on the ground. But in any case, have a water-proof tent. Take along a flashlight and also a supply of candles and matches. Keep your matches in a well-corked bottle or watertight can.

Now about camp fires and cooking equipment. Every good camper knows that a <u>small</u> fire is the proper kind of fire for cooking; and that you cook over the <u>coals</u> rather than the open <u>flame.</u> If you are going to be camping several days, you'll find an old-fashioned cast-iron Dutch oven a big help in meal-getting. It is one of the best all-around utensils for general baking and cooking meat with a campfire.

Take along a good shovel, and a he-man's axe weighing at least 3 and a half pounds. And be sure the axe is sharp and has a sturdy handle. For real camping little axes that hang on belts, or George Washington hatchets aren't much help.

Now here are some ways to start a fire in wet weather. If you are in a

spruce forest, go into the standing green timber. Right against the trunk of the tree you will find numerous small dead branches the thickness of a lead pencil, and larger. Use these for kindling. If you are in aspen timber, select a small standir dead pole 2 or 3 inches in diameter. Split it and use kindlings from the center. You'll also be wise to have a little emergency supply of kerosene oil to help start the fire. Stop at some sawmill and get a half gallon of saw dust in an old can. Dampen the kerosene with the sawdust, and use a tablespoon of this to start your fires.

Of course, you know that before you start a fire, you shovel away all pine needles and ground litter several feet around the fireplace. And, of course, you know you shouldn't start a fire within 10 feet of standing trees, or against down logs, or tree roots. Burn all your papers and cartons in the camp-fire. When you leave the place, put the fire absolutely out by stirring water into the ashes.

A little 2-burner gasoline stove is a fine investment if you are going to camp in a region where fuel wood is scarce, as above the timberline or in a much used campground. You don't have to worry about fire risk with these little stoves. Most people can do a better cooking job on them than over the campfire.

You can also make a small but quite efficient stove by filling a large coffee can half full of sand or dirt, and pouring in a cup of gasoline. Punch 3 or 4 holes in the can just about the level of the sand. A cup of gasoline in a can of sand will burn for 45 to 50 minutes, producing a flame hot enough to heat water or soup.

And here's wishing you happy and comfortable camping on your next trip.